

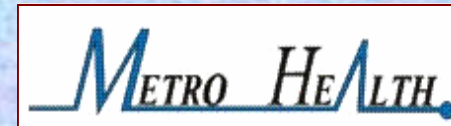
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## SAN ANTONIO METROPOLITAN HEALTH DISTRICT

# Pandemic Influenza

*What do Individuals Need to  
Do to Prepare?*



## Bird Flu, Pandemic Flu, What's the Difference?

### ***Pandemic Influenza is not your usual Seasonal Flu.***

**Bird flu**, or avian flu, is caused by a large group of different influenza viruses which occur naturally in birds. In rare cases, these viruses can infect other species, including humans. Once in awhile, a very severe strain emerges, such as the current strain moving around the world, known as H5N1.

**Seasonal flu** is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses infecting humans. Generally, the people who are most susceptible to severe illness and death are the very young and the elderly. Most people recover within one week.

**Pandemic flu** is a global outbreak, or pandemic, of a highly infectious and severe strain of influenza virus that has been adapted to humans and spreads easily from person to person. Pandemic flu causes severe illness across all age groups. H5N1, the current strain of bird flu, could become a pandemic strain, but at this time it can not be passed from person to person.

## Protect Your Family's Health

*A vaccine for Pandemic Flu may NOT be available immediately. If not, personal protective measures will be critical. Stay healthy. Stop the spread of germs. Follow these basic hygiene precautions:*

1. Avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes.
2. Cover your mouth and nose with tissue when coughing and sneezing. If you don't have a tissue, cough and sneeze into your sleeve. Throw away tissues after use!
3. Frequently wash hands in warm water (15-20 seconds). Use an alcohol-based hand cleanser when hand washing is not possible.
4. Limit personal contacts when sick. Be conscious of casual handshakes, or a kiss on the cheek.
5. Get plenty of sleep. Manage stress. Eat nutritious foods. Exercise.
6. When ill, stay home from work, school, or places where there are many people such as grocery stores and movie theaters
7. See [www.sanantonio.gov/health](http://www.sanantonio.gov/health) for more information.

## What Should *You* Do When a Pandemic Strikes?

1. Get your yearly flu shot.
2. Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.
3. Keep a Family Emergency Health Information Sheet.
4. If you do not have a primary health care provider who is familiar with your health and medical status, find one now.
5. Store a supply of water and food. During a pandemic, if you cannot get to a store, or if stores are out of supplies, it will be important for you to have extra supplies on hand. This is also useful during an emergency such as a power outage or a natural disaster. See [www.readysouthtexas.gov](http://www.readysouthtexas.gov) for more information.



## How does Seasonal Flu differ from Pandemic Flu?

Seasonal Influenza	Pandemic Influenza
Occurs yearly, October - March	Occurs in cycles of 10-40 years, any time of the year
Affects 5-20% of the population, particularly the elderly, infants, and people with existing medical conditions	Affects 25-50% of the population, particularly healthy young adults
In the US, kills 36,000-40,000, with most deaths in the high risk groups	In the US, 70,000 deaths (1957-58) to 500,000 deaths (1918)
Illness usually lasts 5-7 days with full recovery by 2 weeks	More severe illness, for longer period
Vaccine available based upon currently circulating virus strains	Caused by a new virus strain, no vaccine would be immediately available. New vaccine production requires at least six months.
Antiviral drugs have proven useful against current virus strains	Antiviral drugs may be in short supply or may not be as effective against a pandemic strain



## How will a Pandemic affect San Antonio and Bexar County?

The arrival of pandemic flu in our community is not likely to hit in one burst, but rather be a slower, developing process. By the time a full-scale pandemic occurs, 30-50% of our population may become ill, which would have a huge impact on our community. Increased awareness will help us to stop the spread of this disease and limit the number of people who get sick. Local public health officials keep in constant contact with state, federal, and international public health epidemiologists who monitor the pandemic flu situation worldwide. San Antonio Metro Health will release information to the community through a variety of outlets, including TV, radio, print, and the internet. Keep Informed!

[www.sanantonio.gov/health](http://www.sanantonio.gov/health)



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## How Do I know If I Have Flu?

*The flu is easily spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes.*

Typical flu symptoms include:

- fever (usually over 100.4°F)
- dry cough
- headache
- extreme tiredness
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches
- stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, also can occur but are more common in children than adults

